

20/20 VISION: A PATH FOR FIRST COMMUNITY CHURCH 2013-2020

*Presented by Dr. Richard A. Wing, Senior Minister
at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, February 3, 2013*

The Mission formed in 1986 and the Vision formed in 1995 are the cornerstones on which First Community Church builds its ministry through worship, study, giving and service.

Periodically we are called upon to define the Mission and Vision explicitly for the time in which we live.

Before us is a vision for First Community Church between now and 2020. This "20/20 Vision" clarifies what we will be about in the days and years ahead.

Coach John Wooden said, "If you go as far as you can see, you will then see enough to go even farther."

To go "as far as we can see," we must review why, what and how we do what we do in our faith community.

Why We Do What We Do

Our words and actions are rooted in our gratitude for the unconditional love of God. We are enabled to love because we first have been loved completely by God in Jesus Christ.

What We Do

First Community Church is "the church of the infinite quest," as described in 1924 by The Reverend M. H. Lichliter. Remaining true to that spirit, we . . .

- Strive to follow the path of Jesus Christ, while recognizing other pathways to the Divine.
- Encourage each person's spiritual journey, embracing a variety of spiritual disciplines.
- Understand that the words we use to express our faith are to be lived out by loving and compassionate action.
- Take the Bible seriously, not literally; finding more grace in the search for meaning than in absolute certainty.
- Agree to differ, unite to serve, and resolve to love.

How We Do What We Do

We imitate the spirit of Jesus in our living, giving, loving and serving. We do this for our transformation and the transformation of the world. Gracefully, we invite others to join us in this spiritual journey.

BETWEEN NOW AND 2020 WE DEDICATE OURSELVES TO . . .

JOURNEY INWARD

We dedicate ourselves anew to carrying out our Mission and Vision, especially in the following ways:

WORSHIP

Worship marked by excellence in preaching, music, meditation and liturgy will be the centerpiece of all we do at all four campuses (North, South, Akita, Media). We will offer different forms of worship, including traditional, blended, Taizé, meditational and evolving forms yet to be discovered. Excellence in form and content will be the hallmark of every worship experience.

Our worship life will be enhanced by a new sanctuary.

The Governing Board appointed a Steering Committee that created six steps necessary before building a sanctuary. The six steps have been completed and we are better for it.

In 2013, it is time for us to move toward funding and building a new sanctuary for our North Campus. The sanctuary will be designed to offer intimacy to small groups and vibrancy to larger groups, increasing our capacity as well as enhancing our ability to spread the spoken word, music, fellowship and hospitality to more people. We will make sure worship space is a beautiful, inspiring home for our worshipping community and is within responsible monetary parameters.

To build this sanctuary space we will:

- Complete a schematic design by the fall of 2013.
- Begin advanced giving contacts in the fall of 2013.
- Have the campaign kick-off at the Annual Meeting of the Congregation, February 2, 2014.

- Conduct a Spring Capital Campaign in 2014 for the building of the sanctuary plus capital improvements for the South Campus and Camp Akita.
- Break ground in 2014 with completion by the fall of 2016.

After the construction of a North Campus sanctuary, worship and most of our administrative offices will continue at the South Campus.

In addition to creating a sanctuary, we will create . . .

A CENTER FOR THE INFINITE QUEST

As construction of our sanctuary begins at the North Campus, our South Campus will take on an additional identity as the Center for the Infinite Quest. The Center will provide safe, sacred space where individuals can explore multiple mind, body and spiritual practices within a community that encourages contemplative awareness and supports transformation, healing and peace. We will provide safe space for all, including the largest growing religious “denomination” in the United States, the “Nones” (those who check ‘none’ under religious affiliation), and appeal to the large and growing population of “Spiritual but Not Religious.” We will provide a developmental heart-opening and mind-broadening path based on a variety of traditional spiritual practices.

We will install a permanent labyrinth in the Weist Room for daily meditational walks.

We will offer space for classes with faculty from The Methodist Theological School in Ohio (Delaware) and Trinity Lutheran Seminary (Bexley) as well as space for sister organizations dedicated to spiritual growth and human development (like the Spirituality Network, the Jung Association of Central Ohio and the Enneagram Institute).

Further, we will dedicate ourselves on all four campuses to be...

A CENTER FOR CIVIL CONVERSATION

We will invite graduates of *Faith and American Politics* to lead us in pursuing ways to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God” (Micah). We will encourage civil discourse on race, violence, gun issues, mental health, poverty, incarceration, civil rights, science and religion, restorative justice, war and peace and interfaith relations. Currently we are forming groups to address gun specific issues.

A CENTER FOR PASTORAL CARE

Dr. Peter Drucker said that among the most vital institutions in America is the “larger pastorally-oriented church.” We will remind members and the community that what we do best is care, and offer that care to all.

We will continue excellence in **EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRY** in a day when children are at risk of not receiving the proper affirmation and nurture early in life. We will seek ways to encourage enrollment from across the community in our fee-supported Preschool and Mary Evans Child Development Center, and continue to offer opportunities for growth to parents and children.

We will **EVALUATE OUR CHURCH GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**. Church consultants have urged us to take a new look at how to govern ourselves more effectively in the 21st century. A lay and clergy group will be called upon to discover “best practices” for church governance.

In response to God’s love, we will be good stewards of all our resources. We will expand ways to create **A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY** in time, talent and treasure.

All of the above are Spiritual Journeys inward. We will also...

JOURNEY OUTWARD

Knowing that faith is caught far more than it is taught, we will venture to experience faith in these ways:

EXPAND THE SPIRIT OF AKITA, not only among our youth and adults, but with year-round visits from a mix of organizations both spiritual and secular.

ENCOURAGE ADULTS TO GET OUTSIDE THE WALLS OF THE CHURCH in direct service to those in need locally and internationally. Those in need have as much to teach us as we have to give them.

ENCOURAGE ONE YEAR OF SERVICE AMONG OUR YOUTH. We will begin in our Kindergarten to Middle School programs to invite youth to commit one year of collective service during and after their High School career.

Invite the “**RELIGIOUSLY WOUNDED**” into our fellowship. Sometimes, in the name of religion, more damage is done than good. We will let the “religiously wounded” experience a more compassionate way by being a part of our grace-filled faith community.

Create a **MINISTRY OF PRESENCE TO PRISONERS**, both death row and general prison population inmates. Jesus reminded us that in visiting people in prison, we visit him. This ministry is already in motion.

Invite people to become **LOCAL OR GLOBAL MEMBERS** of First Community Church. Local membership involves proximity to our campuses; global membership involves connection through Media Ministry and the Internet.

CONCLUSION

Two things we will do with our 20/20 Vision:

1. *We will be clear about where we want to be and then design the pathways by which we get there.*

When President Kennedy set as a goal to “take a man to the moon and return him” by the end of the 1960’s, the scientists saw it as an impossibility.

Things changed when the scientists began thinking in a new way. Rather than starting at the launch pad, the moon rocket was designed backwards from a successful return to earth of living astronauts, so the moon landing came in the middle of the process. Then they asked what needed to happen before the safe landing, before the walk on the moon, and before the blast off. They were then able to create the steps that needed to be taken forward by beginning from the end.

With clarity we will keep our eyes fixed on where we want to be and then do whatever needs to be done to get there.

2. *We will not blind ourselves to what is possible.*

Ancient Egyptian carvings and writings spoke of a mythical creature some called the “African unicorn”- half zebra, half giraffe. Even with testimony from African tribes, explorers did not believe them.

In 1901, Sir Harry Johnston was given pelts from these animals, but still he and his people did not believe the animal to be real.

In 1918, a live Okapi, a cross between the giraffe and zebra, was captured and showcased in Europe, and today we have several in the Columbus Zoo. People had to radically alter their *scotoma*, which is selective blindness.

Our minds work too quickly to judge what is ridiculous, what is possible, and what is imaginable. Great things have not happened because they were dismissed too early as impossible.

Jesus said, "With God, all things are possible." In the 1920's, the people of First Community Church went with the words of Jesus rather than "selective blindness" and left for us our church that has served us until now, and will continue to serve us as far as any of us can see into the future.

We give thanks for what has been entrusted to us in our time as we seek to be true to the spirit of those who have gone before us.

I know well the history of this church. I do not long for any time in the past. I am grateful for this moment and the path before us.

Let us pray:

For all that has been, Eternal God, we say thanks. For where we are, we rejoice. For all that can be, we humbly say "yes" in the name and spirit of Jesus Christ. Amen.